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WHYS FOR ARTISTS AND ART LOVERS

Why is it that we prize as art treasures the commonplace products of a former day?

Jerome K. Jerome says in "Three Men in a Boat": "All our art treasures of to-day are only the dug-up commonplaces of three or four hundred years ago." I wonder if there is real intrinsic beauty in the old soup-plates, beer-mugs, and candle-snuffers that we prize so now, or if it is only the halo of age glowing around them that gives them their charms in our eyes. The "old blue" that we hang about our walls as ornaments were the common, every-day household utensils of a few centuries ago, and the pink shepherds and the yellow shepherdess that we hand round now for all our friends to gush over, and pretend they understand, were the unvalued mantel ornaments that



the mother of the eighteenth century would have given the baby to suck when he cried. Will it be the same in the future? Will the prized treasures of to-day always be the cheap trifles of the day before?

That china dog that ornaments the bedroom of my furnished lodgings. It is a white dog. Its eyes are blue. Its nose is a delicate red, with black spots. Considered as a work of art, I may say it irritates me. But in two hundred years' time it is more than probable that that dog will be dug up from somewhere or other, minus its legs, and with its tail broken, and will be sold for old china and put in a glass cabinet. And people will come around and admire it. They will be struck by the wonderful depth of color on the nose, and speculate as to how beautiful the bit of the tail that is lost no doubt was. Our descendants will wonder how we did it, and say how clever we were. We shall be referred to lovingly as "those grand old artists who flourished in the nineteenth century, and produced those china dogs."

Why is it that we take certain colors to mean certain emotions?

Probably from innate race perception or intuition. When one has the "blues," it is not the blue of the summer skies which throws a flood of delightful harmonious color all over the landscape, but the more somber tint of indigo. The old masters usually painted Christ in a blue robe, and in the East, from which the wise men came, blue is considered one of the colors most potent in its influence for good. Why do we associate red with warm, passionate love, white with inno-

cence and purity, green with envy, black with death, purple with royalty? etc.

These ideas, like folklore stories, have a meaning, an underlying cause for being other than that of accidental selection. White, for instance, is the union of all nature's colors. It is the apex of the pyramid, and represents purity, because while it contains all nature's forces it has returned to the primeval state of union with the highest. White is creation, black is destruction. One represents the highest type of love, the other the opposite pole. The first manifestation was brought forth from chaos by love. Life is but differentiated love. Even chemical affinity is but the attraction and repulsion inherent in the atoms or units forming substances.

With our necessarily narrow view of life, which is so limited because our senses only take in a few of the millions of different vibrations going on continually around us, we fail to perceive the relation between things. Thus, while we instinctively associate a color with a quality, we can give no material reason for the association.

Why is it that America has developed no eminent painter of children?

It is the French artist who has heretofore given the best expression to child life. Not that Frenchmen are more imbued with philoprogenitiveness than anybody else. Their drawings of baby life have always been delightful. Many are the albums published in Paris all devoted to childhood, and charming they are. In England there have been Kate Greenaway and Walter Crane, and both have drawn young life in a happy and somewhat conventional manner. The subjects delight the children themselves and the fathers and the mothers.

Broadly speaking, we have no artist in the American school who can be called a painter of children. There are perhaps a good many who have painted some charming portraits of children, but none who have been so fascinated with the subject that they have made children



EMBROIDERED SAMPLER
One of the Worshipped Relics

and child life a specialty. The French, on the contrary, have a man whose extraordinary talent, combined with his love for and his insight into child character, has enabled him to produce quaint but beautiful pictures filled with little children with all their childish gestures, poses, and costumes. Boutet de Monvel is not only an illustrator, but a painter of note. America has been favored by having the privilege of seeing a collection of the work of this master. His children are always childlike and sweet, and are executed with infinite

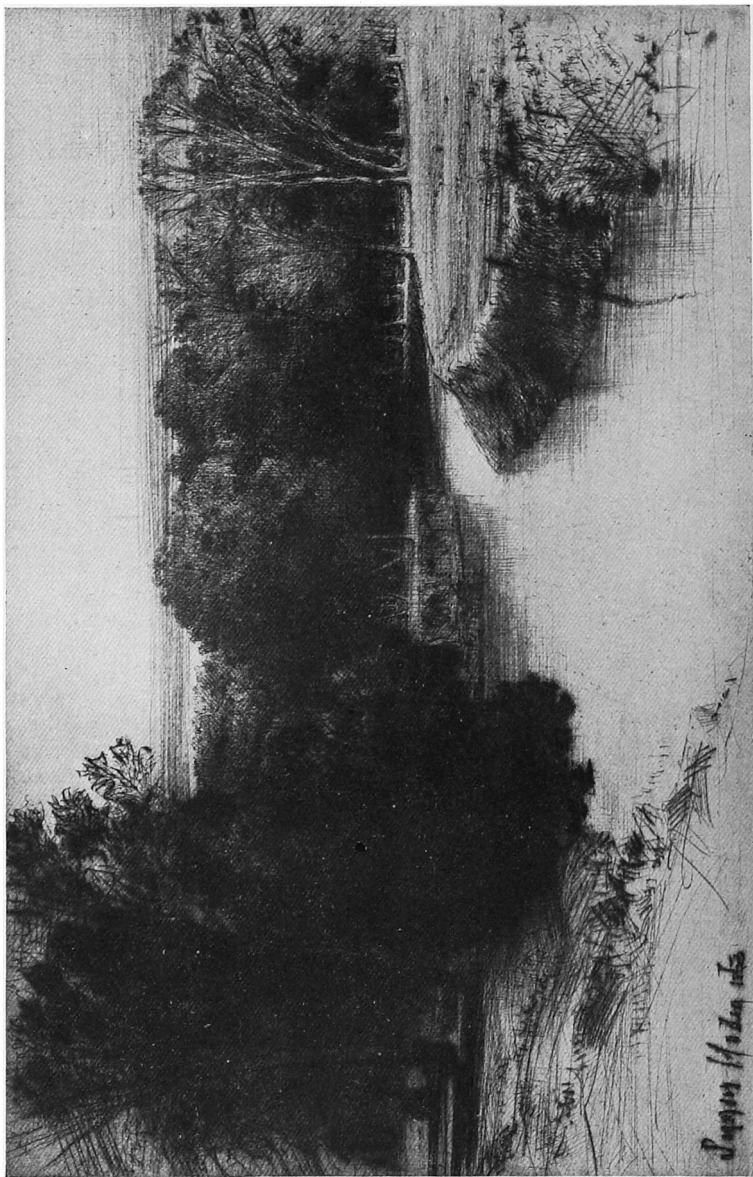


THE FAIRY-TALE
By Boutet de Monvel

pains, each pattern or plaid of the clothing being worked out without monotony or apparent effort.

Why is it that art lovers become enthusiasts over purely decorative work?

The poster fad has had its day—that is, the acute stage has passed, and all that is left of it is its effects on the mechanical and decorative arts. These have been widespread, and to a certain degree have proved beneficial. Simplicity of effect and broad impressions of things Japanese in treatment are some of the results of this art of which the late Aubrey Beardsley and Mucha, of Paris, are two of the principal apostles. Beardsley was grotesque in his work; Mucha has a much more artistic sense of the picturesque. Some of the posters of this latter artist are extremely beautiful, his manner of treating hair and drapery being original and decorative. His sense of color harmony is delicate and captivating, and this, combined with



SUNSET IN TIPPERARY
By Seymour Haden
Courtesy of Albert Roullier



a keen feeling for form and a painstaking search after good drawing, place him in the front rank among artists in his line of work.

In our modern civilization it is the man who can originate something distinctly new and striking who pushes to the front. This is particularly true in pictures and designs made for reproduction. There are so many skilled draughtsmen that that quality in itself forms no special recommendation, but the man who has a new and novel idea in a pictorial way can always find a market for his work.

In a word, the reproduction of nature is not the end of art; if it were, the photograph would be superior to a drawing, which is manifestly not true. Impressionism in literature is the art of representing a great deal with very few words. A sonnet of Shakespeare does not give you nature; it gives a certain impression, which impression originally came from nature, of course. That is art.

Why is it that so few people who study art attain anything like distinction?

Many students seem to imagine that to study a thing is similar to taking capsules at stated intervals—that it does not matter what is done meanwhile. The truth of this statement is seen in the way they speak of study. They "take" or are "going to take" or have "taken." And usually it is as medicine and desire has had nothing to do with it, unless it was a desire to make the capsule as sweet as possible. To study a thing you must think it, you must dream it, you must live it and love it, but you cannot "take" it—it is too large; internal complications will result which may be serious. It won't digest, and you will always remember it as something you had too much of and that it made you very sick. That result in itself would not be such a serious thing but for the fact that you are apt to think of Shakespeare and Michael Angelo and all the rest as being men of most extraordinary powers of digestion, capable of resisting any amount of nausea.



DECORATIVE POSTER
By B. Ostertag



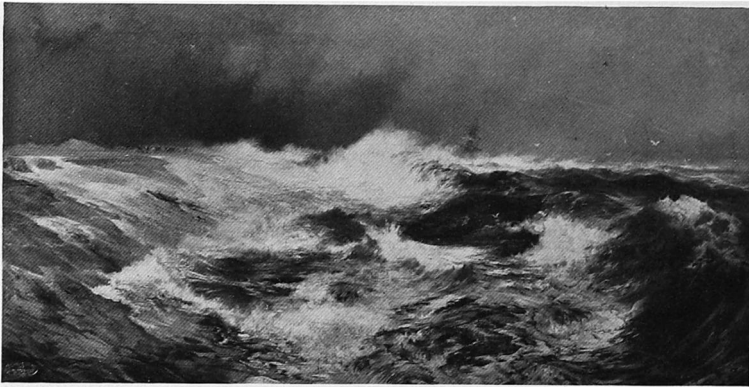
THE YOUNG ARTIST
By Albert E. Sterner

It is interesting to study human nature in a place like Paris and under conditions like those surrounding the student of art in that city. It is not difficult to pick the winners as a rule. Those who think and live their art and those who, like weathercocks, turn with every passing breeze of sensation. The man who is destined to arrive

has as his central thought the expression in material form of some of his thoughts and experiences. Everything in life, every idea passing through his mind, is referred to his master thought and examined under the light of his searching mind.

The fitful ones come and go; some start with all the enthusiasm of youth, and ere long some enticing new experience presents itself—a wayside flower, the will-o'-the-wisp of pleasure; early habits of untrained thought assert themselves; the garden has too many weeds, grown so rank that it is impossible to separate them from the newly planted and ill-tended flowers. The flowers in this case usually die from neglect, and the gardener makes a bouquet of what is left, some of which he loves because their perfume brings forgetfulness.

JOHN B. LONGMAN.



STRANDED SHIP ON EASTHAMPTON BEACH
By Thomas Moran